

# [***DeSantis Defends Proposed Rollback Of Woke Military Policies Including Prohibiting Transgender Members***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RM-X8T1-JBCM-F00K-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 652 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** DeSantis blamed what he said was a crisis with recruiting on the military losing focus.

**Body**

**Topline**

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said the military is losing its way ina CNN interview Tuesday where he explained his proposal to reverse what he calls woke military policies if elected president joining GOP calls to eliminate military diversity initiatives and prohibiting transgender members from serving.

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Republican presidential candidate Florida Governor Ron DeSantis delivers remarks at the 2023 Christians United for Israel summit on July 17, 2023 in Arlington, Virginia. (Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

DeSantis blamed the Pentagon s struggles with recruitment in recent years leading the Army tomiss its recruitment goalby 25% last year on the military losing its way, not focusing on the mission, he told CNN s Jake Tapper on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, DeSantis unveiled a series of military policy proposals he said he would aim to implement if elected president, including eliminating diversity initiatives, prohibiting former military leaders from engaging in ***politics***, banning some climate change initiatives in the military, barring transgender members from serving and ending anti-extremism efforts.

The proposal to ban transgender service members follows a similar ban by former President Donald Trump, which President Joe Bidenliftedshortly after entering office in a bid to allow all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform.

When Tapper challenged his view that woke policies were impacting recruiting, citing an Army study showing concerns over discrimination outweighed concerns about wokeness, DeSantis blamed the results on people being unaware of the true definition of the word.

**Crucial Quote**

I think there s an issue about, like, not everyone really knows what wokeness is, DeSantis said when Tapper asked him about the Army recruitment study. I mean, I ve defined it, but a lot of people who rail against wokeness can t even define it.

**Contra**

Department of Defense officials have rejected the notion that the military is more focused on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives than its core mission of protecting the United States. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. JoAnne Bass suggested the narrative that the military is engaged in woke military policies was hurting recruitment more than those policies themselves in a congressional hearing earlier this month. Where we could use your help is by sharing that message that your services are not focused on any of those [DEI] training more than we are on warfighting, she told lawmakers. Pentagon officials also say they arestruggling to competewith traditional employers in a strong labor market, and many people don t meet the military s physical fitness standards.

**Key Background**

As governor, DeSantis implemented a series of right-wing policies targeting what he refers to as woke initiatives, including banning teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity below a certain grade level, prohibiting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in state-funded colleges and universities, and banning abortions under six weeks of pregnancy. DeSantis has also waged a war with Disney over its denouncement of the state s Don t Say Gay law, and the company has sued his administration as a result of his tactics to limit its power.

**Tangent**

DeSantis sat for an interview with Tapper as his campaign is reportedly recalibrating its strategy amid bleak polling numbers that have shown him trailing former President Donald Trump by double digits for months. Part of the new approach includes lifting a moratorium on mainstream media interviews.

**Further Reading**

DeSantis Signs Bill Banning Public Colleges From Funding Diversity Programs(Forbes)

DeSantis Laughs Off Concerns About His Campaign As GOP Eyes A New Trump Alternative (Forbes)

What Does Woke Even Mean? How A Decades-Old Racial Justice Term Became Co-Opted By ***Politics***(Forbes)

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

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